

## Message Text

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PASS LABOR FOR METCALF; DOC FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
ROBERT HALL

E.O. 11652: N/A  
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SUBJECT: EXPERTS' MEETING ON STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF  
EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT, MARCH 7-11

REF: A) OECD PARIS 2629; B) AGENDA SME/DEC/77',

1. SUMMARY - FIVE-DAY MEETING (MARCH 7-11) OF NON-  
GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS PRODUCED WIDE-RANGING DISCUSSION OF  
FOUR BASIC STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYMENT AND  
UNEMPLOYMENT: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXPENDITURE PATTERNS;  
CAPITAL/LABOR SUBSTITUTION, TECHNOLOGY; LABOR SUPPLY;  
UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOR MARKET FUNCTIONING. TALKS WERE  
HIGHLY TECHNICAL (ONE MORNING WAS DEVOTED TO ECONOMETRIC  
MODELS) AND GIVEN TO ECONOMIC THEORY. WHILE VIRTUALLY  
ALL EXPERTS AGREED THAT CURRENT LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT IS  
AN URGENT PROBLEM, THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS AS TO POSSIBLE  
SOLUTIONS. EXPERTS DID AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT HIGHER  
EMPLOYMENT MUST BE A CENTRAL CONCERN OF DEMAND MANAGEMENT  
POLICIES AND THAT STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEMS -  
WHICH NORMALLY ELUDE DEMAND MANAGEMENT MEASURES - MUST  
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RECEIVE CLOSER ATTENTION FROM TOP POLICY-MAKERS. SECRE-  
TARIAT WILL PUBLISH CONFERENCE PAPERS AND STATEMENTS BY  
FRENCH LABOR MINISTER AND SEC GEN VAN LENNEP IN TWO  
VOLUMES. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY GENERAL'S STATEMENT  
SEC GEN'S STATEMENT, READ BY DEPUTY SEC GEN WOOTTON, MADE  
FOLLOWING POINTS:

- CYCLICAL RATHER THAN STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT IS MORE IMPORTANT QUANTITATIVELY AND MUST BE RESOLVED BY DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES.
- STRUCTURAL UNEMPLOYMENT MUST BE RESOLVED BY OTHER THAN DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES.
- OECD STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED NON-INFLATIONARY EXPANSION HAS ERRONEOUSLY BEEN DESCRIBED AS MORE CONCERNED WITH INFLATION THAN UNEMPLOYMENT.
- SHORTER HOURS TO SPREAD WORK COULD HAVE SHORT-RUN INFLATIONARY EFFECTS AND LONGER-TERM EFFECTS ON LABOR SUPPLY. LABOR ORGANIZATIONS WOULD RESIST ANY LOWERING OF LIVING STANDARDS.
- WHILE PUBLIC SECTOR GENERATED EMPLOYMENT IN PAST, CONSTRAINTS ON PUBLIC SECTOR DEFICITS AND GROWING RESISTANCE TO TAXES ARE LIKELY TO RENDER THIS SECTOR LESS IMPORTANT IN FUTURE.

3. RATIONALE FOR "FRENCH PROPOSAL" -

STOLERU, FRENCH SECRETARY OF STATE FOR MANUAL EMPLOYMENT GAVE FOLLOWING RATIONALE FOR HIS PROPOSAL:

- 1945-70 WAS PERIOD OF RAPID ECONOMIC GROWTH AND FULL EMPLOYMENT.
- SITUATION CHANGED THEREAFTER. NEW PHENOMENA WHEREBY ACCELERATING GROWTH APPEARED TO INCREASE UNEMPLOYMENT.
- 1973 ENERGY CRISIS WAS ADDITIONAL DRAG ON GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT.
- ECONOMIC STIMULATION MEASURES ARE TOO SLOW AND GRADUAL; MUST IMPROVE INFLATION/UNEMPLOYMENT TRADE-OFF BY MEANS OTHER THAN DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES.

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- SUCH MEASURES MUST BE VOLUNTARY AND EFFECTIVE.
- UNEMPLOYMENT IS A BASIC POLITICAL QUESTION REQUIRING POLITICAL ANSWERS.
- WHILE MANY SIMPLISTIC PROPOSALS SUCH AS EARLIER RETIREMENT, SHORTER WEEK AND PUBLIC WORKS DO NOT WORK, GROUPS SHOULD IDENTIFY ECONOMICALLY SOUND PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

4. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EXPENDITURE - THEME ONE

UK EXPERT MADE POINT THAT IN HIS COUNTRY MANUFACTURING

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SECTOR WAS DECLINING IN IMPORTANCE BECAUSE OF PERSISTENT FALL IN EXPORTS AND CORRESPONDING RISE IN IMPORTS. (HE FAILED TO MENTION STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS CONFRONTING UK INDUSTRY WHICH RENDER IT LESS COMPETITIVE DESPITE DEVALUED POUND.) DUTCH PAPER CONCLUDED THAT INCREASING PUBLIC EXPENDITURES IS DIFFICULT UNDER CONSTRAINTS OF TOLERABLE SIZE OF PUBLIC DEFICIT. IT NOTED FURTHER THAT HIGHER PAYROLL TAXES TO FINANCE SUCH EXPENDITURES WOULD RESULT IN HIGHER LABOR COSTS THROUGH TAX-PUSH INFLATION. THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON PROPOSITION THAT MORE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE TO GENERATE OR MAINTAIN EMPLOYMENT WOULD NECESSARILY WEAKEN A MEMBER COUNTRY'S INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND DISCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT.

##### 5. CAPITAL/LABOR SUBSTITUTION THEME 2

###### A. RELATIVE FACTOR COSTS

SOME EXPERTS AGREED THAT INCREASED PUBLIC EXPENDITURES (SEE PARA 4 ABOVE) AND RESULTANT HIGHER LABOR COSTS RELATIVE TO COST OF CAPITAL WOULD LEAD TO INVESTMENT IN MORE PRODUCTIVE REPLACEMENT GOODS RATHER THAN IN JOB-CREATING EXPANSION OF PRODUCTIVE CAPACITY. WHILE GROUP UNCLASSIFIED

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IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT LABOR COSTS WERE INCREASING RAPIDLY IN RELATION TO CAPITAL, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT ON WHAT POLICIES WOULD BE EFFECTIVE IN SUPPRESSING WAGES OR INCREASING COST OF CAPITAL. THUS, STRATEGIES FOR GOVERNMENTS' CONSIDERATION WOULD BE IN DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICY, ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYMENT AND

POLICY OPTIONS FOR DECREASING LABOR SUPPLY. EXPERTS COULD NOT DISTINGUISH EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS ON CAPITAL/LABOR SUBSTITUTION SINCE TECHNOLOGY IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING. GROUP ALSO DIVIDED ON EXTENT TO WHICH OR WHETHER STRUCTURAL (AS OPPOSED TO CYCLICAL) UNEMPLOYMENT HAS RESULTED FROM LOWER RATES OF INVESTMENT AND INCREASING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE. POINT WAS MADE THAT PROFITABILITY MUST BE RESTORED TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT AND JOBS. TO SOME, THIS IMPLIED MORE GOVERNMENT PLANNING AND INTERVENTION. ONE RESPONSE COULD BE EXPANSIONARY MONETARY POLICY WHEREBY INCREASED INVESTMENT RESULTING FROM LOWER INTEREST RATES WOULD INCREASE EMPLOYMENT. THE INCREASE IN EMPLOYMENT WOULD BE GREATER, THE LESSER THE SUBSTITUTABILITY BETWEEN LABOR AND CAPITAL.

#### B. TECHNOLOGY AND EMPLOYMENT

EXPERTS AGREED THAT A QUALITATIVE SUPPLY/DEMAND MISMATCH EXISTS IN LABOR MARKET SIDE AND THAT MANPOWER TRAINING PROGRAMS COULD THUS PLAY A ROLE IN DECREASING UNEMPLOYMENT. GROUP AGREED THAT RESTRAINING PROCESS OF LABOR-SAVING TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT WAS UNREALISTIC POLICY OPTION. ONE EXPERT SAID THE CURRENT PROBLEM REFLECTS TWO SEPARATE PROCESSES, INVESTMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE; NEITHER WILL EVER BE COMPLETELY IN PHASE. ANOTHER CRITICIZED GOVERNMENTAL POLICY MAKERS FOR ADOPTING A GIVEN TECHNOLOGY WITHOUT SOUND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OR CONSIDERING ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES. CITED AS EXAMPLES OF SUCH "IRRATIONAL DECISIONS" WERE THE CONCORDE AND GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR NUCLEAR ENERGY.

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WHILE NO CONSENSUS DEVELOPED OVER GIVEN POLICY OPTIONS, IT WAS GENERALLY FELT THAT GOVERNMENTS SHOULD AVOID CAPITAL-DEEPENING R & D WHICH RESULTS IN HIGHLY CAPITAL INTENSIVE INDUSTRIES. TO HELP EMPLOYMENT IN LDCS, SECTORAL REDEPLOYMENT OF INDUSTRY AND SHIFTING R & D AWAY FROM HIGH LABOR COST COUNTRIES TO LOW LABOR COST LDCS WERE AMONG POLICY OPTIONS MENTIONED' (THESE CONCEPTS WERE NOT DEVELOPED, NOR WERE THE EFFECTS OF SUCH POLICIES ON INDUSTRIALIZED ECONOMIES.)

#### 6. THE SUPPLY OF LABOR-THEME THREE

DISCUSSION PRODUCED SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTED MUCH DIVIDED OPINION. GROUP GENERALLY AGREED THAT GOVERNMENTS OVER-EMPHASIZE ABILITY OF MANUFACTURING AS OPPOSED TO SERVICE SECTOR TO GENERATE EMPLOYMENT. WHILE GROUP IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT LABOR SUPPLY AN ENDOGENOUS VARIABLE REFLECTING WAGES AND INCOME, IT AGREED THAT FURTHER ANALYSES OF SUCH EXOGENOUS FACTORS

AS DEMOGRAPHY SHIFTS ARE REQUIRED. POINT ALSO MADE THAT PSYCHOLOGICAL, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS AFFECT LABOR SUPPLY, E.G., STATUS AND SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF THE JOB. WHILE GROUP AGREED THAT GREATER FLEXIBILITY OF HOURS PER DAY, WEEK, YEAR AND EARLY RETIREMENT APPEARED TO OFFER VIABLE OPTIONS TOWARDS FULL EMPLOYMENT GOAL, NO CONSENSUS WAS REACHED ON LONG-RUN EFFECTS OF SHORTER HOURS IN TERMS OF INFLATIONARY IMPACT

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

AND INVESTMENT LEVELS. GROUP DIVIDED ON MEASURES TO REDUCE LABOR SUPPLY (EXPEL MIGRANTS, KEEP WIVES HOME, EARLY RETIREMENT, LONGER SCHOOLING, ETC.) AS VIABLE AND EFFICIENT POLICY OPTIONS. EXPERTS DID AGREE THAT PHENOMENA OF SECONDARY WORKER (E'G., HOUSEWIFE) IS INCREASING AND IS BECOMING PERMANENT ELEMENT OF LABOR FORCE.

7. UNEMPLOYMENT AND FUNCTIONING OF LABOR MARKETS -  
THEME FOUR  
MOST EXPERTS ESCHEWED THE NOTION OF MORE EQUITABLY DISTRIBUTING EXISTING JOBS AS NOT SOUND ECONOMICALLY. THEY DID AGREE THAT MORE RESEARCH AND BETTER STATISTICS ARE REQUIRED ON LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED AND FLOWS IN AND OUT OF LABOR FORCE. GROUP IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT LABOR THEORY IS INADEQUATE TO DEVISE MANPOWER POLICY, THUS

SOME PROPOSALS COULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. MANY UN-ANSWERED QUESTIONS WERE RAISED SUCH AS WHAT IS GOAL OF FULL EMPLOYMENT, TO CREATE JOBS PER SE OR COMBAT POVERTY? SEVERAL EXPERTS NOTED THE PHENOMENA OF WORKING POOR IN THEIR COUNTRIES. WHILE NO CONSENSUS EMERGED RE

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DEGREE OF GOVERNMENTAL INTERVENTION OR MIX OF REMEDIES (GOVERNMENT SPENDING, TAX RELIEF, EMPLOYMENT SUBSIDIES), GROUP WAS IN GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT LABOR MARKET ITSELF COULD NOT RESOLVE UNEMPLOYMENT PROBLEM. OTHER QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE NATURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT BY AGE, SEX, RACE, ETC. UK EXPERT NOTED INHERENT CONFLICT BETWEEN EQUITY AND EFFICIENCY. FOR EXAMPLE, HE CITED REQUIREMENT IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES THAT EMPLOYERS HIRE A GIVEN PERCENTAGE OF WORKERS FROM CERTAIN CATEGORIES (YOUNG, OLD).

PERHAPS MOST CHILLING NOTE WAS UK EXPERT'S VIEW THAT LONGER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES ARE UNABLE TO REACH FULL EMPLOYMENT, THE MORE DIFFICULT ACHIEVING THIS GOAL WILL BE. HE SAID, THUS, ECONOMIC POLICY PLANNERS SHOULD REVIEW TIMING AND EXTENT OF REFLATION. ALTHOUGH NO CONSENSUS REACHED ON ANY PARTICULAR POLICY OPTIONS, THE GROUP DEBATED EMPLOYMENT EFFECTS OF PUBLIC EXPENDITURES, MARGINAL EMPLOYMENT SUBSIDIES AND DIRECT EMPLOYMENT CREATION.

#### 8. THE US PERSPECTIVE

US EXPERT ELI GINZBERG, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL MANPOWER COMMISSION, OFFERED PRAGMATIC ADVICE AND DESCRIBED POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF HIGH LEVELS OF PROLONGED UNEMPLOYMENT. IN SUM, HE MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- GROUP SHOULD CONCERN ITSELF LESS WITH POSSIBILITY THAT A GIVEN POLICY MIGHT FAIL AND MORE WITH CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE OF GOVERNMENTS TO ACT' THE LONG-TERM COSTS OF GOVERNMENTAL INDIFFERENCE WILL BE GREATER.
- A POORLY FUNCTIONING ECONOMY WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STABILITY.
- HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IS AS IMPORTANT AS HIGH INFLATION AND BOTH CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NAZI GERMANY.
- A FULL EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY MUST BE CONSIDERED AN INTEGRAL PART OF ECONOMIC STRATEGY.
- IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, NEITHER THE INVESTMENT

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MARKET NOR LABOR MARKET ARE ABSORBING THE UNEMPLOYED

RAPIDLY ENOUGH.

- TRADE UNIONS SHOULD BE CONSULTED AND THEIR OBJECTIVES DISCUSSED.

GINZBERG VOICED SURPRISE AT AN EXPERTS MEETING TO DISCUSS STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS TO EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT AT WHICH NO WOMEN EXPERTS WERE PRESENT.

9. FRENCH LABOR MINISTER BEULLAC'S STATEMENT

LABOR MINISTER BEULLAC INVITED OECD AND EC TO CONTINUE TO EXPLORE UNEMPLOYMENT ISSUE TO IMPROVE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE BASE UPON WHICH POLICY MAKERS COULD ACT.

THE FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF HIS ADDRESS:

- HIGHER WAGE DEMANDS DISCOURAGE NEW INVESTMENT DURING PERIODS OF WEAK DEMAND.

- GOF CREDIT POLICIES ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT.

- MACRO-ECONOMIC MODELS FOR ANALYSING EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT ARE OF LIMITED UTILITY.

- GROUP SHOULD EXPLORE LABOR MARKET STRUCTURE'

- IN FRANCE GREAT DIFFERENCES EXIST BETWEEN REGIONS, INDUSTRIES, AGE GROUPS, TRAINING PROGRAMS AND WORKING CONDITIONS.

- EMPLOYMENT POLICIES MUST REFLECT THESE DIFFERENCES.

THE INTEGRATION OF YOUTH IS A FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVE.

- AS OUR ECONOMIES BENEFIT FROM FREE TRADE, THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF THE THIRD WORLD, ACCELERATED BY RECYCLED PETROLEUM REVENUES, OFFERS IMMENSE MARKET POTENTIAL. (THIS REMARKABLE VIEW DREW NO RESPONSE.)

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10. CONCLUSION

A. FIVE-DAY MEETING OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS WAS FREQUENTLY GIVEN TO INTERESTING BUT HIGHLY TECHNICAL DEBATE OF ECONOMIC THEORY AND COMMENTS ON LIMITED UTILITY OF ECONOMETRIC MODELS. THERE WAS NO UNIFIED ANSWER TO THE QUESTION "WHAT DO WE DO?" WHILE VIRTUALLY ALL EXPERTS (EXCEPT GREECE) AGREED THAT HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT IS AN URGENT PROBLEM, THERE WAS NO CONSENSUS ABOUT THE REMEDIES PROPOSED. A CONSENSUS DID EMERGE, HOWEVER, THAT HIGHER EMPLOYMENT MUST BE A CENTRAL CONCERN OF DEMAND MANAGEMENT POLICIES; (THAT, FOR EXAMPLE, OECD SHOULD EXPLORE IMPACT OF TRADE FLOWS NOT ONLY ON BALANCE OF PAYMENTS BUT ALSO ON EMPLOYMENT). GROUP RAISED FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION AS TO WHETHER CAPITALIST SYSTEM IS CAPABLE OF PROVIDING FULL EMPLOYMENT IN MEDIUM-TERM. WHILE QUESTION WENT UNANSWERED, GROUP AGREED THAT MORE STUDY SHOULD BE UNDERTAKEN OF THE EFFICIENCY OF ALTERNATIVE MEASURES TO ACHIEVE FULL EMPLOYMENT WHICH, AT PRESENT CONJUNCTURE, WAS A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN FURTHER ACADEMIC STUDY OF STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT.

B. MANPOWER, SOCIAL AFFAIRS DIRECTORATE HEAD GASS  
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SAID SECRETARIAT WOULD CONSIDER A FUTURE MEETING OF SAME EXPERTS TO CONTINUE DIALOGUE. HE SAID ALSO THAT SECRETARIAT WOULD PUBLISH PAPERS IN TWO VOLUMES INCLUDING INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RAPPORTEUR'S SUMMATION.

11. US PARTICIPATION

DR. ELI GINZBERG, CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL MANPOWER COMMISSION G. CAIN, U. OF WISCONSIN, AND O. ASHENFELTER WERE THE US EXPERTS.  
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